Being a Good Neighbor

The Laboratory and nearby communities have lived together and grown considerably over 50 years. Of paramount importance has been the Laboratory's commitment to provide every employee and neighbor with a safe and healthy environment in which to work and live. But being a good neighbor is more. As residents, employees and their families participate in a wide variety of civic endeavors. As an institution, the Laboratory contributes to the region's high-tech, global-outlook atmosphere and serves as a resource for scientific expertise—in 2001, dealing with the threat of terrorism.

Information, Education, and Assistance in 2001

The Laboratory's scientific and technical capabilities directly benefited the local community in the aftermath of September 11. With terrorist attacks dominating media headlines, the Laboratory provided technical support to government and local agencies and information to the public. Laboratory employees furnished information on the biology and detection of pathogens and on technologies for screening airline passengers and baggage.

At the height of the anthrax scares, Livermore's Forensic Science Center was called to characterize samples of unidentified powder found at Providian Corporation in nearby Pleasanton. Working through the night, Laboratory scientists conducted numerous chemical and biological analyses and concluded that the powder was harmless. Having a long history of assisting local, state, and federal law enforcement, the center also played a key role in the 2001 conviction of "Fremont bomber" Rodney Blach. Painstaking analysis of the electronics of the pipe bombs, including retro-engineering of the timing circuit electronics, provided key evidence linking the accused to the bombings.

Opening two new facilities augmented Laboratory technical and educational outreach efforts. In March, the University of California (UC) at Davis established the Edward Teller Education Center in collaboration with the UC Office of the President, Livermore, and UC Merced. The center will provide opportunities for professional development for K–12 science teachers. In August, the Laboratory became home to the Tri-Valley Enterprise Center. This center supports emerging companies and pilot operations of established firms by providing business services, facilities, training, and advice about technical and business issues. The Laboratory is one among several Bay Area technical sponsors of the center.

Additional assistance to local communities comes from volunteer work and donations collected through the Laboratory's HOME Campaign, which has raised more than $3.5 million for local and regional charities and nonprofit organizations over the last three years. The generosity of employees earned the Laboratory the Tri-Valley Community Champions Award in 2001 for contributing to the well-being of the community.

1950s

Science education efforts began when E. O. Lawrence encouraged his students to work at Livermore. The concept expanded in 1959 with summer programs for students and science teachers. Additional outreach programs launched in the 1960s included activities targeted at minority and underprivileged young people who had a knack for science.

1960s

As the Laboratory and surrounding area grew, employees helped shape their communities through civic activities including volunteer work and, in cases, by becoming elected officials. In the 1960s and 1970s, four Laboratory employees served as mayor of Livermore, and one later served as mayor of nearby Brentwood.

1970s

In 1974, the Laboratory's annual charity collection became the Help Others More Effectively (HOME) Campaign. Launched each year with an employee noontime race, the HOME Campaign has steadily grown and now raises well over $1 million each year for San Francisco Bay Area and California Central Valley charities.

1980s

As concerns grew about the nation's environment, the Laboratory took steps to understand the extent of groundwater contamination due to activities dating from the 1940s, when the site was a naval air station. Novel technologies were developed and implemented to clean up the groundwater, and minimizing new waste became a high priority.

1990s

Encouraged by DOE, the Laboratory expanded its work with U.S. industry—including many local businesses and start-up companies—through licensing and cooperative research and development agreements (CRADAs). Partnerships with UC campuses and work for the State of California also grew through the 1990s.